

Two days National seminar on ‘Recent Advances on Agarwood Research in India’ at RFRI, Jorhat concluded

A two days National seminar on ‘*Recent Advances on Agarwood Research in India*,’ was held at Rain Forest Research Institute, Jorhat on 10 & 11th March’ 2015. About 71 participants including scientists, researchers, traders and farmers all over the country especially from northeast India took part in the seminar and 40 numbers of research paper were presented in four technical sessions in two days. In the inaugural session of the seminar, Dr. N.S. Bisht in his welcome address highlighted about the ongoing research programs and activities of Agarwood at RFRI, Jorhat and requested all the participants to make the seminar a grand success. The Chief Guest of the inaugural session, Dr. Podmeswar Gogoi, Retd. Prof. & eminent botanist overviewed the status of agarwood research in Northeast India. Another pioneer scientist of agarwood research of this region. Dr. S.C. Nath, Principal Scientist, North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR-NEIST), Jorhat delivered Keynote speech and emphasized the overall research trend on Agarwood in northeastern region beginning from taxonomy to physiology and biochemistry of agarwood, its trade and livelihood options. Dr. Moniruddin Ahmed emphasized the need of creation of awareness among the farmers regarding registration of agarwood trees of their plantations with the forest department to get rid of ban for selling their trees. The organizing secretary of the seminar Dr. R.K. Borah briefed about the objectives of the seminar and also wished that the seminar would provide a platform for the Scientists, tree growers, farmers and other endusers to share their views and knowledge.

The major recommendations of the seminar include:

- Need for proper inventory of the Agar plantations in NE region- RFRI can take a lead role.
- Detailed study is required to understand the variation in yield of agarwood in different region.
- Establishment of small scale distillation unit needs to be promoted.
- Develop complete package of practice for cultivation, harvesting, extraction and marketing.
- RFRI must take initiative to formulate a mega project covering all aspects including the role of insect in developing natural infection.
- Studies on host-pathogen compatibility as well as identification of genes responsible for agarwood formation.
- Transfer of new extraction technologies to the end users. Develop agarwood based agro forestry models.
- Draft policy must be finalized immediately by the MoEF &CC.
- Creating awareness amongst tree growers, industry people, forest departments on harvesting and trade related issues.
- Develop state wise Minimum Support Price mechanism.
- Insurance against theft and other natural calamities.
- Develop extension strategy through KVK/VVK for popularizing agarwood plantations in this region.

The valedictory session was chaired by Dr. Ashwani kumar .Director General, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, Dehradun. The DG in his speech to the august gathering said that *Aquilaria malaccensis* (agarwood) is a very important economic plant of North East India. So, he emphasized the need for conservation of this valuable species as the species is almost extinct from the wild. He also clarified the gathering that being a CITES species export of raw agarwood is banned so the farmers can make value added products of *A. malaccensis* on which no restriction exists for exporting. He also informed that Ministry of Environment and Forest & Climate Change has drafted a policy on marketing of agarwood and is in circulation for comment from the all the stakeholders. Therefore, he requested all the stakeholders to make their recommendations to settle the issue as soon as possible. The Director RFRI, Dr. N.S. Bisht assured the audience that RFRI will take up all the research related issues on agarwood so that the farmers can take maximum benefit by raising its plantations.

Glimpses of Agarwood Seminar, RFRI, Jorhat







